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ABSTRACT

School camping began with three movements in American society: children's camping, which has been traced back as far as 1823; the Nature Study Movement, which is thought to have begun as early as 1839; and the holistic "new education." In 1940, L. B. Sharp opened National Camp in New Jersey and Julian W. Smith initiated the Clear Lake camp near Hastings, Michigan. National Camp, a graduate training center for educators and youth leaders, held until 1959 6-week summer sessions in which participants solved practical problems related to their situations. The Clear Lake Camp served as a national demonstration center for school personnel, provided consultation services to schools, and served as a training ground for camp personnel. In 1955, Smith founded the Outdoor Education Project, which nationally promoted outdoor education and school camping. Until the mid-1950's, school camping programs focused on children's personal and social growth, planned cooperatively around the school classroom unit, and based programs on problem solving, work, fun, and first-hand experience. After Sputnik, however, many camps became more school-like. They did not involve children in planning, included short activity "periods," and involved less fun. Biographical sketches of the authors and an abstract of the 1948 New York City Board of Education research into the relative educational values of residential camping are included. (SB)

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Whatever Happened to School Camping?

by George W. and Louise E. Donaldson

An Occasional Paper Issued by the Fund for Advancement of Camping

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National Camp campers watch boys prepare a meal at Life Camp in New Jersey in the 1940s. L. B. Sharp, founder of both camps and early advocate of school camping, is at left.

PHOTO CREDITS: LORADO TAFT FIELD CAMPUS COLLECTION, NORTHERN ILLINOIS UNIVERSITY.

About the Authors

Lou and George Donaldson have been involved in outdoor education since 1943, beginning while it was still known as school camping. They spent four years in the Battle Creek, Michigan program, where George was director of the St. Mary's Lake Camp for two years and the better-known Clear Lake Camp for four. In 1949 they moved to Tyler, Texas, where George was founding director of the first camp in America built for the purpose of year-round community-school use. After 15 years in that program, they moved to Oregon, Illinois, where George is professor of outdoor education at the Taft Field Campus of Northern Illinois University.

George obtained his bachelor's degree in education at Georgia Southern College, and his master's and doctor's at Teachers College, Columbia University. He was the first chairman of the Council on Outdoor Education and Camping and first recipient of both the Reynold Carlson Lecture Award (1976) and the Julian W. Smith Honor Award (1977). He is a Trustee of the Fund for Advancement of Camping.

Lou worked alongside her husband in the Tyler school camping program and has always been his professional partner in writing, in consulting, in preparing filmstrips, and in doing whatever he was doing. Presently they form the consulting team known as The Donaldson Company.

Readers will note that the Donaldsons were participants in the pioneering events of school camping which their Paper describes. While neither one ever attended L. B. Sharp's National Camp as a student, George was there several times for weekend conferences. He also took two groups of children from the Lanning Demonstration School of New Jersey State College at Trenton, where he was principal, to the adjacent Life Girls' Camp for ten-day school camping sessions in 1944 and 1945. Both of them said that preparing this manuscript was a gratifying experience because they were, in the main, writing about dear

personal and professional friends and events that were steeped in a healthy nostalgia.

This Paper tells of the impact that camping has had on education, indicates how it became less "campy" and more "schooly" after Sputnik, and says that many camps are still making vital contributions to education today by including the characteristics of school camping in their programs. Read it as history that sheds light on camping's values today.

A MESSAGE FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Thomas J. Curtin

This Occasional Paper, like those that have been published previously, is designed to demonstrate, in part, the broad interest and outreach of the Fund for Advancement of Camping in its efforts to serve those interested in the utilization of the outdoor experience and specifically the field of camping.

It is the feeling of the FAC Trustees that this outreach is enhanced by the recently announced "FAC Associate Program" that provides a direct method so that you, the reader, can participate more actively in the diverse activities of FAC and its efforts to serve the generic field of camping. For more information about the Associate Program and its significance to the camping movement, write the Fund for Advancement of Camping.

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Whatever Happened to School Camping?

by George W. and Louise E. Donaldson

The substance of this paper was suggested when the authors were asked the above question. A simplistic answer is "School camping became resident outdoor education." But that isn't nearly all of the story. The whole answer is much more involved than that and requires a review of the history of this remarkable post-World War II innovation in American education.

Although both public and private schools had made sporadic efforts in the field of camping over many years, the first sustained effort was launched in 1944 when the W. K. Kellogg Foundation of Battle Creek, Michigan, leased its St. Mary's Lake Camp to a nonprofit corporation, the St. Mary's Lake Camp Association.[1] The association had a governing board composed of the superintendents of schools in Calhoun County, Michigan, as well as a number of concerned citizens. They incorporated because there was some question as to whether public schools could legally operate camps. The camp began operations in the summer of 1944, serving upper grade children (usually fifth and sixth graders) from the schools of Calhoun County.

But the story goes back even deeper into American history and culture than that. Three movements in the society formed the roots of school camping.

1. Children's camping, which Bruce Bennett of Ohio State University traces at least as far back as 1823 at the Round Hill School's summer camp at Northhampton, Mass.,[2] was a well established phenomenon in character-building and recreation organizations—private and public—long before school camping emerged.

2. The Nature Study Movement was traced by one of its early proponents, Liberty Hyde Bailey, to the arrival of Louis Agassiz in this country in 1839. Agassiz's "Study nature, not books" could be said to be the watchword of the Nature Study Society, founded in 1906, and of the movement into the outdoors as a good place for teaching and learning.

3. "The New Education" stemming from the holistic, pragmatic philosophers, William James and John Dewey, also had an impact on the burgeoning school camping movement. A whole generation of educators, influenced by these two great teachers, had moved into the mainstream of American education by 1940. L. B. Sharp had been influenced directly by John Dewey while a graduate student at Columbia University. Julian Smith experienced Dewey second-hand through his close friend, Earl Kelly, of Detroit's Wayne State University.

Two signal events in 1940 presaged the beginnings of school camping in America. It was in 1940 that L. B. Sharp opened National Camp in New Jersey.[3] During the same year Julian W. Smith took some of his Lakeview (suburban Battle Creek, Michigan) youngsters to the Clear Lake Camp near Hastings, Michigan.[4] It may appear highly coincidental that these events occurred at the same time. It may well have been that the three movements sketched above had made school camping "an idea whose time had come," and that someone else would have emerged had these two pioneers not done so. One doubts, though, that it would have been done as well, certainly not as early.

In any event, these two men—in those two states—are now viewed as the joint fathers of school camping, and more lately of outdoor education. Their contributions were on a truly grand scale.

THE NEW JERSEY BEGINNINGS[5]

L. B. Sharp had been selected in 1925 to reorganize the Life Fresh Air Fund's children's summer program, which had been a rather typical health and welfare camp serving poor children from New York City. By 1940 he had moved the camp from Connecticut to New Jersey, had added two additional camps, and was ready in the summer of 1940, to open National Camp, a graduate training center for educators and youth leaders. Arrangements were made with New York University to offer graduate credit for the six-week summer sessions, which continued until 1959. Hundreds of teachers, school administrators, and youth leaders were greatly influenced by Sharp and an outstanding National Camp staff.

Over the 20 years the National Camp staff was composed of well-known youth leaders and camping authorities such as William Gould "Cap'n Bill" Vinal, William M. "Moosewood Bill" Harlow, Reynold Carlson, DeAlton "Dee" Partridge, Sophia Gelavitz, and others. These were all inspiring, colorful people. They added much of the substance which was the National Camp experience.

One of the distinct advantages of the physical arrangements of the Life-National Camps was the fact that directly across Lake Mashipicong from National Camp, the Life Girls Camp carried on a pioneer decentralized summer program. Students attending National Camp had, within easy walking distance, a program of genuine quality. Lois Goodrich, long-time director of Life Girls Camp, described its unique program in her *Decentralized Camping*.[6] Much of the philosophy of the early school camps was derived from observations at the girls camp.

Each student who attended National Camp was expected

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1. Cross, Carole B., *A Study of the Development of Clear Lake Camp*. Master's Thesis, Northern Illinois University, 1957. p. 28.

2. Bennett, Bruce L., "Camping and Outdoor Education Began at Round Hill School," *Journal of Outdoor Education*, Vo. III, No. 1 p. 14-17.

3. Piercy, Ivonne, *Extent of the Influence of Lloyd Burgess Sharp as Identified in the Lives and Professional Careers of Selected Educators and Youth Leaders*, Doctoral dissertation, University of Oregon, 1978. p. 136.

4. Williams, Lloyd David, *Julian Warner Smith, his life, professional career, and contributions to outdoor education*, Doctroal dissertation, East Texas State University, 1976.

5. Most of the information in this section was derived from or confirmed by Piercy, op cit.

6. Goodrich, Lois. *Decentralized Camping*. New York: Association Press, 1959.

"Cap'n Bill" Vinal doing his famous "bog trot" at National Camp.

to work on a project, known collectively as the National Camp Problems. Each project was designed to help its author solve a practical problem in his/her own work situation. Many of the professional educators who attended wrote proposals for initiating school camping in their school districts.

Because of the approaching World War II and the war itself, these proposals were delayed until the mid-1940s. In the meantime, L. B. Sharp was playing the role of the school camping missionary throughout the country. He was highly visible in the American Camping Association and other group work organizations. Among his many consulting activities he led a team of consultants in 1944 to Battle Creek to conduct a three-day workshop on school camping.

One important bit of documentation was provided for the infant school camping movement when, in 1946, L. B. Sharp persuaded the New York City Board of Education to lend its support to an "Experiment in Continued Education Through Camping."[7] In June, 1947, 62 children departed the city for a three-week stay at the Life Girls Camp on Lake Mashipicong, across the lake from National Camp. Two matched classes remained in the city involved in regular school work. Both groups were tested extensively. The researchers, all employees of the New York Board of Education, concluded, ". . . the test results indicated initial and final superiority of the experimental group, with many of the differences in their favor being statistically significant."[8] The experimental group—the group that had gone to camp—had done no school-type work. This research became the first substantial study in school camping. (An abstract of this research is appended to this Paper.)

THE MICHIGAN BEGINNINGS[9]

Julian Smith was to recall in later years that he had no notion that when he attended Clear Lake Camp in 1940, it would mark a complete change of direction in his professional life. He had grown up in Michigan, attended school and college in Michigan, and had begun his teaching career in Michigan. He had become principal of Lakeview High School in Suburban Battle Creek in 1928, and was settled into a career of school administration. As he explained it in 1950: "In the middle thirties, the W. K. Kellogg Foundation built three camps for use in an experimental health program for children. After completion of these experiments, the Foundation made the Clear Lake Camp and staff available to three schools: Lakeview (Battle Creek), Decatur, and Otsego for a year-round school camp."[10]

World War II intruded into the Michigan story much as it did in New Jersey. The Kellogg Foundation turned all three of its camps over to the U.S. Coast Guard for use as training facilities, and Smith left Lakeview to fill a war-caused vacancy in the Michigan Department of Public Instruction. Plans to implement a year-round program of school camping were held in reserve until January, 1944, when the Coast Guard returned all three camps to the Foundation. The St. Mary's Lake Camp was turned over to the St. Mary's Lake Camp Association. In 1945 Clear Lake Camp was leased to Western Michigan College (now University) for five years. The college operated it only until 1947. Both camps were generously funded by the Kellogg Foundation. The third Foundation camp, Pine Lake Camp, was leased to the Veteran's Administration and was no longer to house an educational program.

When the Clear Lake Camp became available (1947), it was proposed that the St. Mary's program be moved there, as it was a roomier and more suitable facility. By this time, enabling legislation had been passed by the Michigan legislature and it had become legal for a school to operate a camp. Battle Creek Public Schools became the sponsoring unit of the relocated camp, but it remained available to all schools in the county.

By this time Smith's responsibilities in the Michigan Department of Public Instruction had been changed to include the state-wide promotion of school camping. In 1946 he had secured a grant from the Kellogg Foundation to finance what was called the Camping and Outdoor Education Study. The Michigan Conservation Department was a joint sponsor. From that time until the study was terminated in 1953, it helped put Michigan schools in the forefront of the infant school camping movement.

Over the same period of time the Clear Lake Camp was serving three functions in addition to providing school camping for Calhoun County youngsters.

1. It served as a national demonstration center to which came school people from over the country.

2. It provided consultation services, through Smith's Camping and Outdoor Education Study, to the schools of Michigan and, through individual arrangements, to other states. School systems in Cleveland Heights, Ohio; Newcastle, Indiana; and Tyler, Texas—among others—began programs as a direct result of such consultations.

3. It served as a training ground from which schools could secure experienced personnel. Kenneth V. Pike left to begin the Long Beach, California, program. George Donaldson began the Tyler, Texas, school camp. Leslie Clark went to Boston University to direct its program. Donald Hammerman left in 1954 to become program director of the first large college outdoor education center, Taft Field Campus of Northern Illinois University.

In the 1950s school systems from coast to coast and from Florida to Canada were beginning to venture into school camping and outdoor education. By the middle of this decade, Julian Smith, who had joined the faculty at Michigan State University in 1953, persuaded a group of manufacturers of outdoor-related equipment to underwrite The Outdoor Education Project (1955). The Project, which Smith directed until his death in 1975, was a joint

7. Life Camps, *Extending Education Through Camping*, New York, The Camps, 1948.

8. Life Camps, op cit, p. 62.

9. Williams, Lloyd Davis, op cit.

10. Smith, Julian W., "The Michigan Story of Camping and Outdoor Education," *Journal of Educational Sociology*, XXIII (May, 1950) p. 508.

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undertaking of the University and the American Association for Health, Physical Education, and Recreation.

In essence, The Outdoor Education Project was structured after the model of the Michigan Study. It sought to promote outdoor education, including school camping, on a nationwide basis. Over the years, it conducted state and regional workshops and each summer it conducted a national workshop. It generated a number of publications. But, most importantly, it made Smith available to the nation. He quickly came to be known as "Mr. Outdoor Education." For two decades he spoke, wrote, promoted, and lived outdoor education.

Sharp and Smith, both dear personal and professional friends of the authors, were widely different in personality and leadership styles. They could probably not have been matched in the direction each gave to this new educational idea. Smith, a member of the educational establishment, worked entirely inside the system and his low-key style suited his role admirably. Sharp, who spent most of his career outside the public school scene, was a considerably more intense individual, whose color and charisma made him the well-nigh perfect Mr. Outside to complement Smith's Mr. Inside.

CHARACTERISTICS OF SCHOOL CAMPING

By and large, school camping programs—until the mid '50s—were operated on the same holistic base as L. B. Sharp's Life Camps and the Clear Lake Camp. Their essential characteristics were:

1. The programs focused primarily on personal and social growth of children, secondarily on cognitive development.
2. The school classroom (a number of children and a teacher) was the basic planning and program unit.
3. Programs were cooperatively planned by the children, teacher, and camp staff.
4. Programs were based on problem solving, not subject matter. To be sure, subject matter was very much used—to solve problems, not taught as separate disciplines.
5. Work experience was a major objective. Children literally did most of the work which went on in the camp.
6. The daily program was broken up into three large time blocks: breakfast to lunch, lunch to dinner, dinner to bedtime.
7. Fun was an important objective, not a by-product.
8. Methodology was based on exploration, discovery and first-hand experience.[11]

In sum, they were much more "campy" than "schooly." But then, in 1957, came Sputnik!

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11. Donaldson, George W., *School Camping*, New York, Association Press, 1952.

School campers getting firewood at Camp Tyler, Tyler, Texas.

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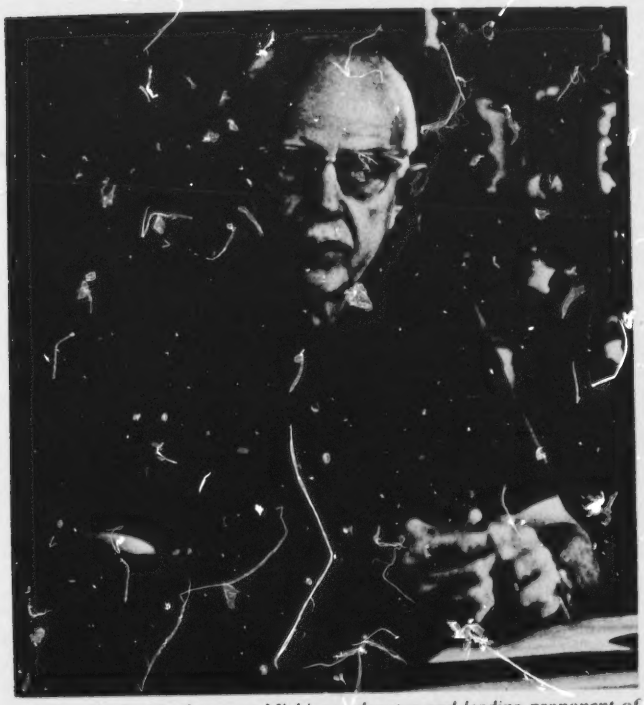

Julian W. Smith, foremost Michigan educator and leading proponent of school camping in the 1950s with nationwide influence.

INFLUENCE OF SPUTNIK

The United States Congress, which had shied away from funding any part of public education except vocational training, found in "national defense" all the reason it needed to loosen its purse strings. Science, mathematics, and foreign languages began to attract significant federal funds. Sad to relate, the nation's schools responded by moving several degrees toward the conservative end of the philosophical spectrum. Many of the school camps—not all—responded to the perceived educational crisis by becoming more school-like. They did not involve children in planning; they broke their days into "periods" much as schools do, and a lot of the fun went out of the program. Even some names changed—most to a name with the word "school" in it: School in the Woods, Outdoor School, and the like. Even the venerable Clear Lake Camp became the Battle Creek Outdoor Education Center. The term Resident Outdoor Education eventually predominated.

No doubt it is clear to the readers of this paper that the authors place themselves squarely and firmly at the holistic end of the philosophical spectrum. They do not believe that there were any good reasons for school camping to change its name or to retreat one bit from its philosophical roots. Only the children lost when it became more school-like.

But it *did* change! Only in the last few years have observers begun to note the advent of outdoor education programs which lean heavily on the fun motive and which are predominately holistic in method. These programs are new enough (at least in the educational establishment) that their generic name, Adventure Education, is not widely known. Some of them are back-packing, cross country skiing, orienteering, climbing, rappelling, wilderness camping, and the like. Even the "cultural journalism" of Eliot Wigginton (*Foxfire* books) is seen by some as holistic outdoor education. All of them are difficult to squeeze the fun and excitement out of. It is devoutly hoped that they will not go the way of school camping.

The very idea that camping and outdoor experiences *can be educative* may well be the one great concept to come from what was known as school camping. What had generally been perceived as a "fun thing" came to be an educative thing which was fun! In its holistic mode it made an easy and natural blend of the cognitive, the affective, and the psycho-motor domains of education.

Many schools and youth-serving agencies, including private and agency camps, have come to realize the multi-faceted values of simple outdoor experiences. The great variety of programs carried on by hundreds of agencies bears out that fact.

One of the most hopeful adaptations of educative outdoor experiences is that utilized in programs for delinquent and predelinquent youth. At least ten types of outdoor-oriented programs which focus on what Kendall I. Lingle called Youth at Risk were identified by Lingle.[12] Prominent among these programs are the old (since 1946) decentralized, year-round camping programs sponsored by the Salesmanship Club of Dallas, Texas[13] and the Eckerd Wilderness Camps which carry on ten camps located in Florida, North Carolina, Vermont, and Rhode Island. Interestingly, the Dallas program was planned by Campbell Loughmiller as his "problem" at L. B. Sharp's National Camp in 1946. Then, in turn, Loughmiller was prime consultant to the Eckerd Camps. A number of other similar camps have sprung up over the country.

All of public education is suffering demographic and economic pains as the 1980s begin, as are private programs. Outdoor education, in some localities, was first to go and last to be restored. In other places it has survived remarkably well. Literally thousands of school districts over the United States and Canada are involving teachers and children in some kind of outdoor education. From its feeble beginning at St. Mary's Lake Camp in 1944, the then-small movement has come to be a sprawling, diverse, and sometimes divided educational medium. Millions of youngsters have participated. Public and private education is better because of it.□

12. Lingle, Kendall I., "Alternatives for Youth-at-Risk," Occasional Paper of Fund for Advancement of Camping, 1980.

13. Loughmiller, Campbell, *Kids in Trouble*. Tyler, Texas, Wildwood Boosk, 1979.

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"Dee" Partridge and National Camp Students

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ABSTRACT

Of New York City Board of Education Research, 1946

by

Debroah S. Hutton and Jane Gorder

In an attempt to discover the relative educational values of a residential camping experience, the Board of Education of New York City initiated an experiment with the cooperation of Life Camps and the aid of the Lindlof Camp Committee for Public School Children. Briefly described below are the design and results of the experiment as outlined in *Extending Education Through Camping*, published by the Board of Education, City of New York, Life Camps, Inc., 1948.

The teachers of the two participating classes, each located in a different school district, were carefully chosen on the basis of not only their indoor teaching abilities but also their knowledge and enthusiasm for the outdoors. One teacher was assigned to a grade five class and the other to a grade seven class, each to work with those students for the year prior to the summer residential school camp experience.

After eliminating students with physical defects or behavior abnormalities, random selection and parental permission determined the final list of participating students for each experimental class. The control class for each school was made up of students who closely matched those in the experimental classes on the bases of age, sex, intelligence quotient, and reading ability.

At the end of the 1946-47 school year, both control groups returned home to enjoy the normal summer vacation while the experimental classes departed from the city to participate in three weeks of residential school camping. This experience involved decentralized camping at the New York City School Camp near Sussex, New Jersey. It was the regular camp program with no academics included.

Evaluation of this experiment involved the collection of objective data as well as semi-objective and clinical data from all experimental and control groups in April and again in June, 1947. Following the experience, opinions were solicited from the campers, parents, and educators involved.

Objective data indicated a greater gain from initial to final testing in the experimental groups (the groups that had gone to camp), particularly in vocabulary and interest inventory. Similarly, the semi-objective and clinical data suggested general enrichment of the experimental groups. Pupils, teachers, and educators overwhelmingly agreed that the experience was highly positive. The results were of such significance that incorporation of residential school camping into the school system was recommended.

This experiment gives one a glimmer of hope that the bond between man and the environment has not been severed and indeed, may be strengthened significantly through the integration of outdoor experiences into the education and personal growth of children.

Deborah S. Hutton and Jane Gorder are graduate students at Northern Illinois University studying in the M.S. Ed. program in Outdoor Teacher Education at the Lorado Taft Field Campus of the University at Oregon, Illinois.)

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36 South State Street
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